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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - U.S.-JAPAN SUMMIT IN NEW YORK

¶1. All media outlets gave top coverage to the Hatoyama-Obama summit, remarking the two leaders reaffirmed a commitment to strengthening the bilateral alliance. Both print and broadcast media noted the President and Prime Minister did not discuss controversial issues facing the bilateral alliance such as revision of the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement, review of the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan, and the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. The media commented that instead the two leaders focused on broad areas of agreement such as the need to work closely to overcome the global economic crisis, the need to address North Korea's nuclear program through the framework of the Six-Party Talks, and the need to cooperate to achieve a nuclear-free world.

¶2. According to the limited newspaper coverage, Hatoyama was anxious to put specific policy items on the backburner and to dispel an image of being anti-American. The papers also noted the U.S. did not press Japan out of deference to the new government. Editorials and analytical articles on the bilateral summit did not make the morning papers because it was held at a late hour, from around 22:30 Japan Standard Time.

¶3. Morning and noon television programs included commentary from correspondents in the U.S. A Nippon Television (NTV) correspondent commented from New York that although Hatoyama expressed in the summit his intention to come up with civilian assistance for Afghan reconstruction by November, when President Obama is expected to visit Japan, little time remains for the prime minister to develop alternatives that satisfy both the U.S. and the Japanese public. TV-Asahi said that the U.S. side deliberately staged a friendly atmosphere in light of the caution growing within the U.S. against Hatoyama's intention to "review" U.S.-Japan relations. In a telephone interview with Fuji-TV's infotainment program "Tokudane!," foreign affairs journalist Ryuichi Teshima said that Hatoyama exercised political leadership and used his own words at the summit,

as opposed to what has been common in the past when the summit meetings have followed scenarios written by foreign ministry officials. Teshima said that the summit can be called a "revolution" in that regard.

14. While media outlets gave the summit favorable coverage, they noted the Hatoyama administration will have to formulate concrete plans for an alternative contribution to Afghanistan and a plan for the relocation for the Futenma facility before President Obama's expected visit in November. In its morning news program Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK) commented Hatoyama's diplomatic skills will be put to the test when pending issues are put on the negotiating table.

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